

INFANT BAPTISM INFORMATION:

This policy was adopted according to the Sacramental Guidelines: The Initiation of Children of the Diocese of Hamilton (February 17, 2012), adhering to the guidelines established by Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church.

Baptisms at St. Patrick and St. Lawrence parishes

Contact: phone **(905) 522-9828** or email **parishoffice@stpatrickshamilton.ca**

St. Patrick website: **stpatrickshamilton.ca**

St. Lawrence website: **stlawrencehamilton.ca**

A new baby in the family! How exciting! There are many things to consider at this joyous time in your family's life. Baptism is the primary spiritual consideration for Christians of the Roman Catholic faith.

We hope that this information will be helpful in your decision making.

**Q. I want to have my baby baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.
What is the first step?**

A. The first step is to call the parish office at (905) 522-9828 to set up an appointment with the Parish priest. Arrangements for a particular Baptism are always to be made by the parents in a personal meeting with the pastor. Arrangements are never to be made by phone, email, or by simply completing a form. We encourage you to have your child baptized within the first few weeks after birth.

Q. What is involved in Baptism Preparation?

A. When families desire to have their child welcomed into the faith community through the sacrament of Baptism, a period of preparation is required to familiarize them with the ceremony of Baptism as well as the commitment they are undertaking to raise their child in the Roman Catholic faith. **In addition to participation in the Sunday Eucharist, parents are required to attend Baptism Preparation session** (information re upcoming session will be provided during your initial meeting with the parish priest). Godparents are also invited and encouraged to join the parents for this catechetical meeting.

Q. When does Baptism take place?

A. Generally Baptisms are scheduled once a month and are celebrated during the Sunday Mass or immediately following the Mass, depending on circumstances and the number of Baptisms. (Please contact the parish office regarding the upcoming dates for the Baptisms) In the case of emergency, the Baptism should not be delayed. Please contact the priest or parish office (905) 522-9828 if your child is gravely ill.

Q. Can we have a private Baptism?

A. The norm is to have a communal Baptism celebration. The sacrament of Baptism is the first of the sacraments of initiation into the Roman Catholic faith. This community would like to welcome you and to share in the privilege of raising your child in the faith. As such, the community is very much a part of this celebration.

Q. Can our baby have more than two godparents? Can we have two godfathers or godmothers instead of a godmother and a godfather?

A. The role of the godparents is purely a religious one. They are to accompany the child in the development of his/her faith. Canon 873 of the Code of Canon Law states that there will be **only one godfather or only one godmother; or a godfather and a godmother**. By specifying this, the analogy is made between natural parenthood and spiritual parenthood.

Q. Who can be godparents?

A. Since the godparents' role is to assist the parents in raising the child as a Catholic, their selection is a very important decision. Canon 874 states that to serve as a godfather or a godmother, the following conditions **must** be met:

- To have been chosen and to have the aptitudes and the intention to serve in the function of godparent
- To be at least 16 years of age
- To be a **Catholic who has completed the Christian initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)** and who lives a life coherent with the faith.
- To be free from any canonical penalty imposed or declared
- To be neither the father nor the mother of the baptized
- A **baptized** non-Catholic could serve with a Catholic godparent but will act as a Christian witness to the baptism (meaning there would be one sponsor listed in the parish register and on the Baptism certificate; the other person would be listed as Christian witness)

Q. Can members of all Christian denominations serve as a Christian witness along with a Catholic godparent (sponsor)?

A. No. Only members of certain denominations may serve as Christian witnesses to a Catholic baptism – eg. Anglican, United, and others. These denominations believe in baptism conferred with flowing water accompanied by the Trinitarian formula – in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **If you are unsure about your desired sponsors' religious eligibility please contact the parish office.**

Q. I am currently residing in another parish, but would like to have my baby baptized at St. Patrick Parish in Hamilton, ON or St. Lawrence Parish in Hamilton, ON. What is required to make this happen?

A. We require a letter from your parish of residence stating: (a) you have attended a Baptism Preparation session (b) your pastor grants permission for your child to be baptized in this parish.

Q. Are we allowed to take pictures during the Baptism?

A. Yes, but they should be limited to one designated photographer per family during the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism and should also be taken from a discreet distance. Following the ceremony, you may take other pictures with the priest, family members, etc. for a period of approximately 15 minutes. **Due to the sanctity of the altar and its immediate surroundings, we ask that you respect and reverence this area by not going beyond the sanctuary steps to take pictures.** Videos of the ceremony should also be limited and discreet.

Our aim is to provide the best possible understanding of the sacrament of Baptism for families and godparents, and to help you make this a truly spiritual experience of God's love. We wish you joy and blessings as you assume your new role as Christian guardians of the faith for your child.